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The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

JANUARY 1946

On Accepting Life
By LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD

We Seek Not God in Vain
By ALLAN KNIGHT CHALMERS

Atomic Energy - - and Religion
By LLOYD ELLIS FOSTER

The Church in the World Today
By VICTOR M. RHEIN

Wherein Is Our Hope?
By JOHN CLARENCE PETRIE

Beauty for Ashes
By HOOVER RUPERT

Preaching and Religion Today
The Second of Two Articles
By JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

Sermon Illustrations

Contributed by Readers of THE PULPIT

A Voice from the Dead

Sgt. James L. S. Dunlop, a member of the Royal Canadian Airforce, crashed to his death on Oct. 11, 1941. While in England, he had written a letter to his parents in Niagara Falls, N. Y., with the request that it should not be mailed unless he failed to return from one of his flights. Here is the message contained in the letter:

"If there is any message which the coming generation should have from mine, let it be a message from us who have fought and died to make future generations of human beings possible. Let the message be this: 'We have cleared the site and laid the foundations. You build.'" —*The Christian-Evangelist.*

That's Another Matter!

Too many of us are like the native who was asked, "If you had one hundred sheep would you give fifty of them for God's work?" "That I would," he replied, "I would be glad to give fifty." "If you had one hundred cows would you give fifty?" "Of course I would," he replied. "But you wouldn't give fifty out of one hundred horses if you had them." "Oh, yes, you would see that I would," insisted the native. "Well, if you had two pigs would you give one of them?" The man's countenance fell. "No, I wouldn't," he said. "You happen to know that I have two pigs and the question is not fair." —*L. L. Dunnington, First Methodist Church, Iowa City, Ia.*

A Fixed Point of Reference

In the moral and spiritual wilderness that is today, we need a fixed moral point of reference as we journey through life. That fixed point of reference, that beacon or sign-post, is a Person, Jesus Christ.

Admiral Byrd once had a terrifying experience near the South Pole. For some months he lived in a lonely outpost, and there the problem of exercise was ingeniously met. He tied a cord to two sticks. One stick he planted by his ice-block cabin; the other he carried with him and fastened it upright in the ice some distance from his home. He would walk back and forth across the ice by tracing his way by that string. "The line," he said, "was a thin cord through chaos." On clear days he would venture beyond that line by driving a bamboo stick about every 30 yards. One day he advanced too far. "I was lost, and sick besides," he wrote. To get his bearings, he made a sign-post of broken ice, and then, with two stars to help guide him, he sought the stick and the line he had lost. He stepped off 100 paces in this direction, and back to his beacon post. He walked 130 paces in that direction, and still no luck. After making several attempts in various directions, he found that bamboo stick, and great was his joy! He had located himself by a fixed point of reference, and made his way back to his cabin in safety.—*Lavens M. Thomas II, Methodist Church, Lebanon, Tenn.*

Basis of National Greatness

Many years ago, when David Lloyd George was in power, he met with Mr. De Valera to discuss with him the Irish question. In the course of the conversation, the English premier asked one of his secretaries to bring his Welsh Bible, a volume of Welsh poetry, a volume of Welsh sermons, and a volume of Welsh hymns. Turning to Mr. De Valera, as the books were laid upon the table, he said: "You see these books, sir; these are the things which are the foundation of a nation's true greatness."

'Tomorrow Will Do'

The story is told of a man who dreamed one night that he was carried to a conference of evil spirits. They were discussing the best means of destroying men. One rose and said, "I will go to earth and tell them the Bible is a fable, and not God's word." Another said, "Persuade them that Christ was only a man." Still another said, "Let me go; I will tell them there is no God, no Savior, no heaven, no hell." "No, that will not do," they said. "We could never make men believe that." Finally one old devil, wise as a serpent but not as harmless as a dove, rose and said, "Let me go; I will journey to the world of men and tell them that there is a God, there is a Savior, there is a heaven, and a hell too. But I will tell them there is no hurry; tomorrow will do; tomorow will be even as today!" And he was the devil they sent!

The story is fiction, but its message is a fact. That devil is among us now, but the wise are not deceived by his lies. "What will you do with Jesus, who is called the Christ?"—face to face with that question, the man w thinks that tomorrow will do ev as today is of all men the most d ceived.—*J. H. Marion, Jr., Gra Covenant Presbyterian Church, Ric mond, Va.*

The Power of Prayer

John Klingberg's Home for Ch dren in New Britain, Conn., is an lustration of what earnest prayer c do. Forty years ago, when Klin berg was the pastor of a small chur in that town, a policeman told hi of three tiny children whose moth had left them, alone and hungry, a shack at the edge of town. T parson transferred them to his ow home and his wife "received the with tears in her eyes." He w getting only sixteen dollars a we so they just prayed for the childr and trusted God. Help came fro many sources—and so did more ch dren. Inside of one year he h eighteen orphans in his home. For years have come and gone since the with over 1,100 orphans having be reared in John Klingberg's "family" There are one hundred there no He has never asked anybody for penny in all these years. He has ju prayed for his children. He has r ceived over $2,000,000 in cash besid food and clothing. The buildin on his forty acres are worth half million and are debt free. And mo of his orphans have made excelle citizens. Yes, something happens wh a man goes all out for others in i tercessory prayer.—*L. L. Dunnin ton, First Methodist Church, Iow City, Ia.*

What Do You See?

The story is told that Willia Blake, the poet, was walking on beautiful morning on the beach nea Brighton with a London shopkeepe As the sun came up, the shopkeepe asked the poet: "What do you see a the sun comes up out of the wate like that? I see a yellow disk whic looks to me like a golden guine What do you see?" Blake replied "I see a host of angels, and they ar crying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord Go almighty, heaven and earth are fille with thy glory. Glory be to thee, God, most high!'"

What a man sees is determined b what he is. "Blessed are the pure i heart: for they shall see God."— *G. S. Nichols, Collegiate Methodi Church, Ames, Iowa.*

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The Pulpit

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

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On Accepting Life

BY LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD

HERE is a strange passage in the book of Ecclesiastes. When reading it for the first time one ardly believe one's eyes, so startling is it to find the Bible. Yet it seems to me to state, however ly, one of the great truths about life; a truth of such importance that without understanding it we can hardly make sense of the things that happen to man. It runs as follows:

"All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the evil, to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; . . . the race is not to the swift, nor the to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor to the men of understanding, nor favor to the of skill; but time and chance happeneth to all."

ner or later everybody needs a faith or a phiy of life big enough and strong enough to stand disaster. Blessed is he who has his anchor secure e the storm breaks. When what we call disaster s in upon us, we are too stunned to be able to ge our ideas, too bewildered to begin to erect our I love the story of the Scot who lay dying, whose daughter asked if she should read to him passages from the Bible. "Na, na, lassie," he said, eekit [thatched] ma hoose in calm weather." s try to make sure this morning that our house ersonality is adequately protected against all ers.

DISASTERS—TWO KINDS

ere are two kinds of disasters:

) Disasters that come to us from the ignorance, or sin of man. I am not now thinking of those les which are obviously our own individual fault. thinking of disasters that come to us from others. robably all realize that we are closely linked with reat human family. Without the assets of the y—those privileges and advantages won for us gh the knowledge and wisdom and good character ers—we could not live. A moment's thought will us how, from getting up in the morning to to bed at night, we depend in a thousand ways hat other members of the human family have for us. Receiving and benefiting from these assets, we are not surprised to learn that disaster falls upon us through the liabilities of the human family. Other men's ignorance and folly and sin bring disaster to us. Those of us who in one lifetime have suffered through two wars, need no reminder of that grim fact. All disease falls in that category. It comes to us through ignorance of its causes, prevention or cure.

(2) Then there are disasters which come from what we may call the forces of nature. One thinks of storms at sea and floods on land, tempest and earthquake, prairie fires and typhoons. Things that cannot be put down to human ignorance or folly or sin, but which nevertheless man has to call disaster. Try as he will, a farmer who is both pious and efficient may nevertheless lose his crop in a night.

"ALL THINGS COME ALIKE TO ALL"

The most important point I want to make this morning is stated in the first sentence of our text: "All things come alike to all." And the first step in trying to understand the universe and make sense of life is to accept that fact. We so often act as though we believed that a good farmer, who said his prayers and did his best, ought to have a guarantee from God that he at least would reap his harvest. It is not so. We act as though we believed that a sincere Christian woman should not be attacked by cancer. It is not so. Again and again, the minister who shares the confidences of his people is asked questions like this in the day of calamity: "What have *I* done to deserve this?" "Why should *my* baby die?" "Why should the bomb fall on *my* house?" "Why didn't *my* boy come home?" And behind all these questions is the old heresy, which the book of Job sought to answer, that God is the kind of person who rewards goodness with what we call beneficence and evil with what we call disaster.

Do let us get into our minds, once and for all, this great truth: Disaster, whether it falls in either of the categories I have mentioned, falls alike upon all, without any reference whatever to the merit or character of its victim. "All things come alike to all." And the sooner we part with the dreadful heresy that God sends calamity to this man, disease to that woman, bereavement to one and failure to another, by way of punishment or individual consequence, the better. As we do his will we increasingly prevent these calamities. So how can they represent his punishments? Can doing his will rob him of his power to punish? If so, doing his will in one direction defeats him in another.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

This will be such a new thought to some that I must refer at once to the Master. Disease, we said, falls in the first category. It is due to man's ignorance or folly or sin. Jesus never regarded it as the purposeful dealing with a sinful man on the part of God by a divinely

intentioned suffering. When they brought a woman to Jesus who had been ill for eighteen years, he labeled her thus: "This woman whom Satan hath bound these eighteen years." Satan! When the disciples said, "Lord, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus said, "Neither!" When what we should call a calamity fell upon eighteen men, on whom the Tower of Siloam fell, possibly because of human folly in terms of insecure foundations or inadequate mortar, Jesus asked incredulously whether the disciples really thought that they were sinners more than all they that dwelt in Jerusalem, and answered his own question with a resounding "No!"

But you will say: "Surely, even if that is true in regard to the first category, when you come to talk of natural calamities, they are obviously the work of God." Exactly! But Jesus welcomed the majestic sway of those great cosmic laws which entirely disregard all ethical considerations. He would have fully approved of Matthew Arnold's verse:

> Earthquakes do not scorn
> The just man to entomb,
> Nor lightning stand aside
> To find his virtues room.

The processes of God, as we see them throughout the whole universe, take no notice whatever of human merit. The laws of the universe are trustworthy and many of them can be learned. Perhaps all of them *can* be learned, but, as far as man's spiritual nature is concerned, God's cosmic laws are utterly impartial, and Jesus made this clear. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." Both in countries where the sun is a friend and those in which it is an enemy; in countries where the rain is a blessing and in situations in which it is a curse.

WRONG ACCEPTANCE OF LIFE

If we accept this situation, we can talk more usefully on the whole problem of accepting life. There is, of course, a wrong acceptance of life by which we lie down under it, as the phrase has it, and in a fatalistic and unchristian way resort to behavior which might bear the pagan label "resignation." You would be right to say to me: "I am not going to accept life as it is handed out to me. I am going to fight it and master it and overcome it and wrest it to my own highest purposes." I am sure that attitude would command the full approval of Jesus. Nor are we to accept life in that sense for others. The whole world was horrified by the disclosures of the German concentration camps. It would be no Christian attitude to accept life for our fellows in terms of such horrible tortures. I am even glad to notice that one verse of the familiar hymn, "All things bright and beautiful," has now disappeared from our hymnbook:

> The rich man in his castle,
> The poor man at his gate;
> God made them high and lowly
> And ordered their estate.

It is a good thing that that verse has gone.

Turn, then, to the right kind of acceptance. Sur
it is to prevent disaster if we can, to fight it and o
come it if our resources enable us to do so. But if
if disaster falls upon us, not to lie down under i
resignation, not to suppose that it is the intentic
will of God directed personally against us, but to
gard all disaster which cannot honorably be avoi
or successfully prevented or overcome, as the circ
stantial will of God, the will of God in those circ
stances which have befallen us.

HOW JESUS MET THE CROSS

Here again Jesus shows us the way. If the c
could have been honorably avoided, he would h
avoided it. He is found seeking a way out even at
eleventh hour. "If it be possible let this cup pass f
me." When it could not be thus honorably avoi
we do not hear from his lips the moan of an
christian resignation. Nor does he believe it to be
intentional will of God, since it is the fruit of
He sees it as the will of God in the circumstances
has thrust upon him and meets it with ungrudging
ceptance, knowing that from it can be wrested a s
itual advantage by which the experience of disa
may be turned to glorious gain. So the cross, the f
of man's sin, the symbol of evil torture, has bec
for us the most holy symbol of triumph and victor
the world.

We see that same right way of accepting life in
case of St. Paul. He speaks of the "thorn in the fl
which scholars tell us may have been epilepsy. He
not lie down under it, for he prays repeatedly tha
may disappear. He does not regard it as the wil
God, for he calls it "a messenger of Satan." But w
he cannot prevent it, evade it or overcome it, he
lieves that he can win something splendid from it
accepts it in that spirit. Let me quote his exact wo
"There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a m
senger of Satan to buffet me. . . . I besought the L
thrice that it might depart from me, but he said to
My grace is sufficient for thee; for my power is m
perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, wil
rather glory in my weaknesses that the power of Ch
may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in we
nesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in
tresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, t
am I strong."

PAUL SPEAKS FROM PRISON

In the same way Paul meets the imprisonment wh
must have hampered and frustrated that eager sp
more than we can easily guess. But from the place
imprisonment he writes: "I would have you kn
brethren, that the things which happen unto me h
fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel;
that my bonds became manifest in Christ; and most
the brethren in the Lord being confident through
bonds are more abundantly bold to speak the word
God without fear. So that in every way Christ is p
claimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejo
For I know that this shall turn to my salvation .
in nothing shall I be put to shame, but with all b

as always, Christ shall be magnified in my body, her by life or by death. For to me to live is st, and to die is gain."

ne Christian man, then, will not suppose that what all disaster will be deflected from him because of iety or faith. Yet there is a differentiation. When ter falls upon the pagan he argues either that is no God or that he is not good and his reaction tends to be resentment, bitterness, hostility, re-on. When it falls upon the Christian, he can, by ttitude to it, entirely alter its effect on personality. he pagan, therefore, disaster holds no value. It is ed on the liability side of life's ledger. It is dead (Though I believe that in later life if that pagan s to a knowledge and understanding of God, he turn past liability into present asset, and turn the ience, which once was dead loss, and which hurt because of this attitude to it, into spiritual gain.) the Christian can even make evil into asset, and nce of an intention of God finally beneficent. I der if you have ever thought of this: that the man is not made good by what we call the good s of life becoming his. The good man is made usually by the bad things that happen to him. because the bad automatically produces good, but use the good man takes such an attitude to bad s that he changes their effect on himself.

'MEN OF FAITH LOOK FORWARD'

t me repeat again also the point we made some ago, that the clue to the *spiritual significance* of ter is never to turn back and seek its cause in the but to realize that its spiritual significance will ound in the future. In olden days, and far too in modern days, men to whom calamity comes, who ask why, look back. The men of faith look ard. Notice the future tense in Paul's words dy quoted. *"I will rather glory* in my weakness the power of Christ may rest upon me." Or , "All chastening seemeth for the present to be joyous, but grievous: yet *afterward* it yieldeth eable fruit." Or again, "Our light affliction, *h is for the moment,* worketh for us more and exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."

know that we may often trace our own calamities to their cause, and say, "This is caused by that." very little of spiritual worth has been achieved when we succeed in tracing causation. The true otance of life, whether causation can be traced or is to say, "From this disastrous experience, God ng me, *I will win* something splendid."

Then, therefore, the gray messenger of sorrow ks at the door of the house of life, it may be ble for you to drive him away honorably. It may ossible for you to overcome him. But if he gets oot in the door and will not be turned away, ask for his papers. As you look through them, you find the sanction of God. I mean by that, that *allows* disaster to happen to us which he does not Even at the cost of repetition let me make that rence clear. You *allow* your child to tumble be- the risk is necessary if he is ever to walk alone. You don't *intend* him to tumble or you would push him over. When you find the signature of God, permit the gray messenger of sorrow to enter the house of life. You must accept him. You must make terms with him. You must even make friends with him. Then you will find that in time he ceases to be the gray messenger of sorrow and takes upon himself the form of one of the angels of God.

SINS AND SAINTHOOD

So often I hear it said that the goodness of God is denied by the disasters in the world, by the awful suffering through which men pass. "How can there be a good God since he allows all this pain?" Let me put it to you that the goodness of God is proved by the possibility of disaster, not denied by it. Look at it this way! God allowed the possibility of sin in order that there might be such a thing as saintliness. If man could not sin, he could never rise to sainthood. He would be an automaton. In a similar way God allows disaster because by taking the risk of disaster man can become a far grander being than he could ever become if disaster were not even allowed.

Supposing God had said to himself, "I must not allow suffering to fall on man. I must load him with what he calls beneficent gifts, but I must not let him have anything except comfort and ease and pleasure and happiness. He might not believe in me. He might be rebellious and hostile." By cutting off the possibility of disaster, God would cut off the possibility of courage, heroism, self-sacrifice, endurance, and some of the richest qualities of which man has shown himself capable, ever emerging into consciousness as evidence of the greatness of man. That would mean that God denied man even the possibility of becoming his best, and that would mean a bad God rather than a good God. That is to say, a God who would not even allow man to be the best that he could be, a God who chose the lower instead of the higher way.

MAN STILL IN THE MAKING

There is a true sense, men and women, in which the possibility of evil is a measure of the purposes of God. The measure of his purposes must be the measure of our faith in his purposes and our determination to bring those purposes to fulfilment. No one is saying that this is the best of all possible worlds. What I am saying is that this is the world of best possibilities, a world still in the making. If you like to put it so, the seventh day of Creation is not yet over, and in the great flux of life man is still in process of emerging. Ten thousand things can happen to us which are not the intention of God. "All things come alike to all."

What does comfort me is that nothing can ever happen to us from which spiritual gain cannot be won. Everything depends on whether we accept life rightly or wrongly. Everything depends on what is our reaction to the things that come our way. Jesus nowhere says that a good man will be spared the thorns of life. All things—thorns included—come alike to all. What Jesus does say is this, that he will help us to do what he did, wear the thorns as a crown.

Beauty for Ashes

By Hoover Rupert

Scripture: Nehemiah 2:1-20.

An ancient legend tells of the fabulous bird known as the phoenix. At the age of five hundred years this bird, about the size of an eagle, is said to have built a funeral pyre of wood and aromatic gums which it lighted with the fanning of its wings. Instead of dying as it had prepared to do, it arose from the flames with renewed life. Down through the ages the phoenix has served as a symbol for immortality and for the dawn of a more glorious age. It arose from the ashes of a funeral fire to ascend into the beauty of that ancient morning where it again found life.

The phoenix can serve as a symbol for us today. In a troubled time we are tempted to give up hope and allow the fires of evil to reduce virtue to ashes, when actually we can rise from those ashes into the grey mists of a new morning of hope and beauty.

Nehemiah faced a world similar to ours. His people had been in exile for several generations. Yet, they held firm to the hope that some day they would be restored to their rightful place and their holy city of Jerusalem would again assume its glorious existence. Fired with enthusiasm, Nehemiah obtained permission from the Persian king to return to Jerusalem, to which many of his people had already returned, in order that he might lead in rebuilding the city, especially the walls, which had been leveled to the ground.

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem he found anything but a hopeful situation. The city had been devastated and burned to the ground. Although the return of the exiles had begun over fifty years before, the city was nothing but an ash heap with a few hovels in which the discouraged people lived. The walls were in ashes and ruins. The Temple was still as it had been left by the Babylonians years and years before. All was in ruins and ashes.

It was not a hopeful sight which greeted the eyes of this enthusiastic young man. People were not favorable to his proposals. They were discouraged and hopeless. But Nehemiah had seen a vision of what might be and he was willing to risk scorn and ridicule. He was determined to rebuild the walls and the city. And he did! On the ashes of a devastated captive city Nehemiah led the people in establishing the new Jerusalem. It was not the glorious Zion of prophetic dreams. But—it was beauty from ashes!

When we look at our lives today, we recognize that there are parts of them which have been reduced to ashes. The bright flame which brings beauty to life has many times been extinguished, and its values duced to ashes. As Nehemiah inspired the anci Hebrews to bring beauty from the ashes of their loved city so we can be inspired today by the w of Christ to build the beauty of Christian living on ashes of our lives. We need to have in our lives beauty of unselfishness, the beauty of love, and beauty of faith.

I

We need to build the beauty of unselfishness on ashes of selfishness and greed.

Many of you saw the New York World's F several years ago and were thrilled as I was at marvelous wonders of the "world of tomorrow." I strolled over the grounds looking at the wonder sights I could not help marveling also at the thou that this world of tomorrow had been erected what was once an ash heap. Known as the "Flushi Flats," this area had been the dumping ground the nearby cities. Yet one could enjoy this interesti display, and appreciate the composite beauty of world of tomorrow, because the evolution there h been from ashes to beauty.

In our lives today, if there are ashes caused selfishness or greed, we can build on those ashes beauty of unselfish living. Selfishness is a sin fr which few of us are totally free. Certainly we seeing all over the world the result of man's selfi ness and greed. War is reducing the world to ash literally and figuratively speaking. As Christians must conquer this sin, purge our lives of selfishn and greed, and rise above its ashes to the beauty unselfishness.

Who of us here this morning has not at some time his life benefited because there was in the life of so one of our acquaintances the beauty of unselfishne For most of us this found its first expression in mother's love for and service of our youthful desires

We honor those who twenty-five years ago g "the last full measure of devotion." This was uns fishness. Had we sown on the ashes of our devasta world in 1918 the beauty of love and unselfishness, day's history would be one of peace and good w But the hatred which found expression in the hea of those who had been in conflict gave rise to n selfishness and increased greed, so that in recent ye we have known another and more terrible holocaust.

The important thing for each of us here this mo ing is that we shall cleanse our own individual li of selfishness and greed. Then the beauty of Chr tian living will rise from the ashes which threaten smother the full expression of that Christian living.

II

We need to build the beauty of love on the as of prejudice and hatred.

We think of tar which is used to pave roads a streets as being ugly and ill-smelling. Yet, did y know that contained in that tar are the loveliest col in the world as well as sweet perfumes and heali drugs? Chemists tell us that ages ago the earth w

ed with a growth of vegetable and plant matter. e process of becoming covered over, the vegeta- ormed great beds of coal from which the juices aps drained into pools of coal tar. Into this ent all the colors and perfumes of that ancient By means of the "benzine ring" the scientist can extract from tar these colors and perfumes, s drugs which have a remedial effect on the body. fore, when you see tar, you are really seeing ! If you were to take it to the scientist, he extract that beauty for you.

ny lives are just like coal tar. There is beauty m but it has to be extracted. The benzine ring tracting the beauties of life is the message and f Jesus Christ. He is the scientist. His is the la. The basic element in that formula is love.

many lives the beauty of Christian love has buried in the coal tar of prejudice and hatred. ace of seeing the beauty of love, we see only the ss of prejudice.

example, many people carry religious prejudice with them through life. Because someone is other faith, we are prone to regard him as out- ne Christian fold. So we have "fundamentalists" ning against "modernists" and "liberals" ridi- "conservatives." We have Protestants who ze Roman Catholics and Jehovah's Witnesses censure other Protestants. And the source of conflicts is to be found in religious history and rance. In order to prevent these results of preju- ve need the Christian virtue of understanding and will.

again, there is political and social prejudice. Be- a person is a member of a different political or of a different social set from ours, we assume s all the weaknesses and shortcomings for which ay criticize that group. Our attitude toward an dual is governed solely by a *general* prejudice. any good come out of Nazareth?" So the sees scornfully asked when they heard Jesus. ever had, they assumed, so none ever could.

h blinded prejudice indicates that one not only iled to cultivate the virtue of love, but also has d incapable of clear thinking untinged by in- nce.

en, of course, there is racial prejudice. The race is prejudiced against the black, and the against the brown, and the brown against the v—and so on. To think that we as Christian e in a so-called Christian nation will allow the of one's skin alone to determine our opinion of Certainly when this occurs we have allowed the y of love and tolerance to be smothered by the of prejudice and hatred.

ese expressions of prejudice are not across the omewhere. They are right here at home in our ed America. We behold and condemn the mote cial and religious bigotry which Hitler has used st the Jews, while we are unconscious of the of prejudice in our own eye which blinds our and stifles our Christian virtues.

e need to purge our lives of all prejudice. We need to stamp out all religious, social and racial intolerance. Then we can follow the example of Nehemiah and build on these ashes the beauty of Christian life which is the life of love.

III

We need to build the beauty of faith on the ashes of doubt.

We look at the world today and the condition in which we find it shatters our hopes for the bringing in of the Christian way of life. We must have the faith which can bridge the chasm of doubt. We need to build the beauty of faith on the ashes of doubt and fear.

The great San Francisco earthquake and fire in the early years of this century dealt a stunning blow to that city. It was so devastated that it seemed the city would never again be rebuilt. But it was! Following the pattern of Nehemiah and the ancient Hebrews, on the ashes of their city the people erected an even greater San Francisco. To celebrate this achievement they held a great exposition in 1940. At the top of the highest tower in the fairgrounds they placed a golden statue of the ancient phoenix, symbolic of the fact that the city had arisen from its funeral pyre to greater heights than before achieved.

Cannot we follow their example? Cannot we take the phoenix as symbolic of our day?

It is my firm faith this morning, and yours too I am certain, that God has not abdicated; that all is not lost; that though evil seems in control, "God is the ruler yet"; that, somehow, good will be the ultimate result. Remember, emperors come and go, dictators rise and fall, but God is eternal. His power is supreme from everlasting unto everlasting. Caesar was thought invincible, but he fell. Napoleon met his Waterloo. And today's dictators are doomed. The world is the creation of a good God, and good *will* triumph. This is our faith tremendous, through which the world will be reborn to trust in God.

When Augustine, that great Christian leader of the fourth century, lay dying in his home in North Africa, the barbarians were pounding at the gates of his beloved city of Hippo. Even then he foresaw the fall of the Roman empire. The barbarian was sweeping all before him. He seemed invincible. All that was culture and religion seemed doomed for extinction. But Augustine knew that all was not lost. He saw that not only would the culture of Rome be burned, but also its evils and sins. He envisioned the great "City of God" as rising from the ashes of a dead civilization. This was his hope, his faith, that from the ashes of his world would rise the beauty of the City of God.

Centuries have passed and still that city has not arisen. We have a part in building that city. Again the world is threatened. But in this mighty storm let us cling to this lifebuoy of hope; from the ashes of our world will rise an even greater civilization, the Kingdom of God. Here, instead of the ashes of evil will be seen the beauty of unselfishness, of love, of faith, of Christian living!

The Church in the World Today

By Victor M. Rhein

THE WORLD with which God confronts the church today is one of earth-shattering events. The old order is dying. We have come to what Berdyaev has called "the end of our time." A new world is a-borning. We today stand between these two worlds in what is commonly known as a period of transition. An old anecdote relates the incident of Adam and Eve being driven from the Garden of Eden. Adam took Eve by the hand as they reached the garden gate and said: "My dear, this is an age of transition."

Since that first stage of transition there have been many subsequent ones. But it would be fair to say that never before in history have there been such far-reaching and catastrophic changes as we have been witnessing in these very days in which we live.

I

We are all asking ourselves, from one standpoint or other, "What of the future?" If you are in an industry you are asking yourself what you must be doing to provide employment and the maximum of production in the postwar era. If you are a statesman you are asking yourself what you must be doing to insure a just and durable peace. If you are an educator you are asking what steps must be taken to equip youth to live abundantly in the world of tomorrow. Those of us who are churchmen ask ourselves what the plan and program of the church must be if it is to provide spiritual leadership and to prove that it is truly *The Church,* the living Body of Christ.

We are deeply concerned about the church. What is to be its role or special function in the days ahead?

To that question there are those who say that the church has had its day. They gratefully acknowledge all that the church has accomplished in the past. It is the mother of the finest in our society today. But her children have outgrown her and she has been unable to keep up with them. She mothered charities, but today they are nurtured by the community and state. She gave birth to hospitals, but today every community feels its responsibility for the care of its sick and suffering. The church fostered education. From the day of the Pilgrim Fathers until now our own Congregational Church has planted schools across this vast land. Today education is in large measure sponsored either by the state or by secular forces of the nation. The church is the mother of the arts, but they too have grown up and left the ancestral home.

A second group is represented by those who lently assert that the new world which is comin birth has no need for the church. Nazi Germany tempted to make the state its God, Hitler the messiah, and nazism the religion of its millions of votees. A few years ago a book was written which vealed the nazi marriage ceremony. The ceremony to be solemnized in the Temple of Blood, ofte confiscated church. The aisle was to be lined Storm Troopers, who with rifles and swords creat canopy of steel overhead. When the couple rea the altar they stood before a bust of *Der Führer.* nazi priest raised his hand in the nazi salute, and s "United in the nazi world outlook you have fo your way to one another. Your German blood will rest until you have proved Christianity to be a doctrine." A violent new paganism which has bec a demonic force in the lives of millions of Ger youth has been set up as a new religion. And w there may be some change of climate as a resul military defeat, the effects of this rampant paga will be far-reaching. There was not merely an in ference toward the Christian church, as in the cas those who say it has had its day, but there was a lent opposition which exercised a streamlined tor system that would put the Spanish Inquisition of a centuries ago to shame.

II

But over against these two answers to the ques of the place of the church there must be name third. The world today needs the church more in any other era in history. With the Duke of W ington, as he dedicated a new archbishop to South Wales, we say with all the emphasis we command: "They must have a church."

They must have a church to create and maintai eternal perspective in the mind of man and in heart of society.

Friedrich Nietzsche, noted German philosophe the last half of the nineteenth century, boasted, " is dead." Nietzsche not only spoke of his own fee but was prophetic of the general attitude of soc toward the divine in the era to follow him. W God died, Superman was born.

But note carefully what happened. Moral disi gration, cultural anarchy, cold cynicism, the diss tion of international law and world catastrophe lowed. Nazism, with its demonic aspects, is the re of the death of God in the minds of men and soc Superman has fought everything high and noble has ever issued from Nazareth. Master races have tempted to establish new orders in which the lif man should be patterned after their own image. consequence is that today the world of nations wri in the fierce flames of God's judgment. Several y before the outbreak of the present war, one of leading thinkers of England said: "The attemp shape the life of human society by ends which are wholly in this world will inevitably mislead and stroy them."

The Christian church takes its stand with Arch

the ancient Greek mathematician, who said that ı contemplate lifting the world you must find a ım outside of the world on which to put your We need an eternal perspective. We are finite ransient beings, and only as our lives are lived ur societies built in the perspective of that which inite and eternal can we expect to find meaning ndurance.

number of years ago a hurricane destroyed a little h on the coast of England. The people found elves unable to replace it and made provisions to ip elsewhere. One day a representative of the h admiralty came to the minister and asked him y contemplated rebuilding the church. The min- stated their position. Then said the representa- f the admiralty office: "If you do not rebuild the h, we will. That spire is on all our charts and . It is the landmark by which the ships of the seas steer their courses." And so it is in life. church stands in the community as a landmark ach of us. It points us to the eternal by which we chart our courses in life and plan our society. r another thing, men must have a church as a s of releasing and channeling the power of God eir lives and in society.

ıe days ahead are going to demand all the mental, cal and spiritual resources we are capable of mus- g. Our own human resources are not going to be gh. No attempt to lift ourselves by our own boot- s will be adequate. On the contrary, we will be oor, weak, and in the end, disillusioned. We need and the salvation he is able to give. Christianity s that there are resources beyond ourselves from h we may draw. The essence of great religion is ct of receiving and using the grace of God.

zekiel, a young Israelite in exile with his nation, people lie down and go to pieces under the hard- of slavery and exile in Babylon. He must have tempted to give up, too. But he tells us: "The t entered into me, and set me upon my feet." iel had something done to him. He was set upon eet by the Spirit of God. It is that which we need ur time. Ezekiel was not saved from troublous : but what did happen was that God set him ı his feet and gave him power to handle his trou- well and to make them stepping stones to greater nsions of character.

here is the power of God which will lift our d from the morass of its chaos and conflict if only re able to release and channel it.

few years ago a construction company took a con- to build a bridge across the East river in New k to connect Manhattan Island with one of the oughs. They laid the foundation on one side and moved to the other side to lay the second founda- They soon discovered an old stone-laden barge en at the spot where their foundation was to be They employed divers who fastened cables to barge. Then they engaged tugboats to drag it y. But the tugboats could not budge it. After con- rable waste of effort and time the contractors were lespair. But a young engineer hit upon an idea. He asked for an empty barge and at low tide he anchored it to the cables which the tugboats had pulled and jerked upon. The tide of the mighty Atlantic came in and calmly and gently the old barge was lifted and one small, insignificant tugboat easily pulled it away.

The young engineer did very little except to provide the conditions. The Atlantic did the work. Today the church must prepare men and women to accept the mighty powers of God in their hearts. We have been depending upon our own strength and powers too much. If we could provide the conditions for the release and channeling of God's power into our lives and society, we could be lifted to new planes of life and conduct.

For still another thing, men must have a church to do some creative pioneering in the world today. All around us we hear of the new things that are to be offered us now that the war is over. It will be a new world of gadgets. But unless there is also a new spirit created they may be of but little benefit to mankind.

One day a man entered the laboratory of the great scientist, Charles P. Steinmetz. After a few minutes of general conversation about science the man asked Steinmetz where we need the greatest emphasis in research today. He replied that he considered it to be the realm of the spirit. Steinmetz said that when men turned over their laboratories to the study of God and prayer and spiritual forces the world would see more advance in one generation than it had seen in the past four. Here in the church we have just such a laboratory.

We need spiritual resources more desperately today than anything else. There is a desperately critical spiritual lag that threatens to destroy all our glorious human achievements. This spiritual lag is grossly evident on all fronts today. We who proclaim ourselves to be but little lower than the angels have created a world that is our master. We have created a Frankenstein, and we bow in awe before it.

Heinrich Heine, one of Germany's greatest lyric poets, tells the story of a master workman who was so skilled as an artist that he could fashion with his hands anything which his mind conceived. One day he decided to create a man. He entered his studio, assembled the materials and started to work. He fashioned a noble head, strong arms and legs, and a perfect body. Just as he was putting the finishing touches upon his masterpiece, the creature turned upon its creator and demanded: "Master, give me a soul." The workman was confused and perplexed, for he had never before been confronted with such a situation. It was a request with which he could not comply. In desperation the creator rushed from the studio, slamming the door behind him. But the creature followed him, close upon his heels in furious chase, demanding: "Master, give me a soul!"

We have created a splendid world with all the skills and techniques of our devising. But we have left out the most important thing. We have failed to give our creation a soul.

We have a world upon our hands that has rapidly become a neighborhood. Our means of transportation and communication have brought the isles of the seven seas very close together. A few years ago I sat at a luncheon in London. It was given in honor of a half-dozen of us American ministers who were to spend the summer preaching in English pulpits. A minister from Seattle arose and remarked that the world of today is a small place. He said: "The other day I received a cable from London that was sent at three in the afternoon. I received it at nine in the morning of the same day, six hours before it was sent." Then he went on to say that the day was not far away when one could have breakfast in London, fly to New York and have breakfast again, and then fly to Seattle and still have a third breakfast. And our air lines are right now bringing that to pass.

What does all this mean? It means that we have China in our back yard, Africa as our next door neighbor, Russia to another side of us, and Germany across the street. Our scientific miracles have made our world a neighborhood. But it must be more than that. Here is the need for the Christian spirit. We must transform our neighborhood into a brotherhood if we are to enjoy peace and happiness. The church has the capacity for this spiritual pioneering. There is growing in our midst a world-consciousness that promises much for the future. Today the church is the only institution whose pulsebeat can be felt around the world. In this and other realms we must have a church if we are to have any creative and vigorous spiritual pioneering.

III

Is not all this enough, and more than enough, to justify all we have ever done or can ever do on behalf of the church? To see the church in all its possibilities is to call from each of us a renewed stewardship of time, talent and money. No investment of any of these can be too much.

When we work through the church we literally work for God. The church is not a society like other human organizations. It is a divine society founded by Christ. It is his living Body. Cultures and civilizations have declined and gone into oblivion, but the church has risen above their passing. It stands amid the smoldering debris of civilizations and points men to the way. With Christ standing over a Jerusalem soon to be destroyed, but heeding no warning, the church says, "If only thou hadst known the things which belong to peace." It points to the way and urges men to walk in it if they would thrive and prosper. Here she stands, the church of the living God, strong and invincible.

> Unshaken as the eternal hills
> Immovable she stands;
> A mountain that shall fill the earth,
> A house not made with hands.

Could there be any better prayer for each of us today than this: "Revive thy church, O Lord, this day, beginning with me"?

We Seek Not God in Vain

By Allan Knight Chalmers

Deuteronomy 30:11-14.

THE TEST of righteousness is the same for e age. Circumstances differ, thereby altering c But the test we apply to determine righteousness n changes. We always look to see if the intention the words and the deeds of a man agree. We

to see if his heart and his h and voice are united in p and thanks to God. It is a difficult test to meet. have the words of Jesus and writer of Deuteronomy to port us in that. Yet men all the time to meet the They fail to intend what say they do. They fail to v for what they profess to w And so the great and fu mental question of all tim whether men will match w and desires with righteous de

An American newspaper correspondent in R stood beside a Russian mother as the reports of Yalta Conference were broadcast to the people outdoor amplifiers. It was close to midnight it was cold. They stood hunched up in furs as listened. The Russian mother had just learned her fourth and last son had been killed in ac With her were two of her widowed daughter law. When the words came, "It is our inflex purpose to insure that the peace of the world never again be disturbed," these three saddened wo broke into quiet sobbing, and the mother, tur to the correspondent, clutched his hand and sai a tone almost pleading: "They mean that, don't t Tell me they do. For by the Lord God, I say have paid for no less than that."

Yes, to every man and nation comes the mor to decide. Will words and desires be matched deeds of righteousness? Or will we find that, us, it is too hard?

A STRANGE ASSURANCE

The Deuteronomist said, "The word of God is too hard for thee." Such is the first assurance tha felt it necessary to give his people. He wanted to to them that belief in God was not too difficult that obeying God's commandments was within power. We find it strange that he should feel a ance necessary. For our experience is that far finding the word of God to be a hard discipline, people of our time regard it as quite easy. They r in and out of the Christian church with as much as they come and go in a political club. The que doesn't seem to be whether or not they can meet demands of Christian faith. On the contrary,

regard that as quite easy, the only question is ther or not they want to, or find it important o so.

he assurance that the word of God is not too hard, efore, doesn't appear applicable to us in the least. it is, and we'll see how it applies when we look at the historical situation with which the Deuter- nist was contending. He stood in the midst of a le who had made one concession after another ne religion of the Canaanites. The Hebrews had red Canaan with a religion requiring morality, teousness, neighborliness, and belief in God alone. they had found in Canaan many gods—gods se images were set up in the holy places for all e with their eyes and not just to worship in spirit. y found also a well established set of sacrificial It was supposed that performance of the rites sure to please the gods, and that the gods in turn then sure to bestow all desired blessings upon the le. It was as easy as that. They did not have to er about truth or a change of heart or social jus- Inward communion with an unseen God was hard for them. They preferred instead the con- reality of a golden calf to worship and the writ- word of ritualistic laws to govern their conduct. wonder, then, that the Deuteronomist had to as- them that the word of God was not really too for them.

Ve need the same assurance today. For there are all over the world who have found inward com- ion with an unseen God to be too hard. And so have turned to other gods who are easier to see whose commands are easier to understand and w. For some, a human dictator is the god; for rs, a particular economic system; and for still rs, the "social register." A Colgate professor a years back used to say that a football should be -plated and placed in the chapel, since it was the ege's chief object of worship! There are many other . We need only add that if some of our fellows to be persuaded to worship the one true God, they t first be assured that it is not beyond their power worship him. For his word is not too hard.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

lor, says the Deuteronomist, is the word of God off. A young theological student was describing a non he had preached about how man must admit he is finite. We should have to agree with him. are certainly imperfect and limited creatures, most of the time think more highly of ourselves n we ought to think. Then, the student continued, must emphasize the majesty of God—how far re- ed God is from finite man. Well, we should e to agree with him again, and admit the majestic ness of a mighty and most wonderful God. But time has come to add an objection to our agree- t. We must object to any conception about the tion of man to God which so widely separates n that God becomes aloof and man becomes im- ibly lonely. It was the loneliness of men in ancient days that moved them to mold their own gods that they might be near them. Tradition had it that Moses had seen God on Mt. Sinai. But that had been a long time ago, even then. And meanwhile, the conception of God had become a wiser and purer one; but no one had succeeded in persuading the people that they could relate themselves to a spiritual God even as they could to a god who was physically near enough to be seen.

GOD NOT FAR OFF BUT 'NIGH UNTO THEE'

So the Deuteronomist had to say to them: "The word of God is not far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?" We can imagine what derisive skepticism must have been in the people's minds. "If God is a spirit and in heaven," they must have said, "how in the world can man be expected to know what he wants?" It wasn't a foolish question. If it had been, men wouldn't have kept right on asking it from that day to this. But they have kept right on asking it because they are really troubled and lonely; and we haven't believed the Deuteronomists when they said we need not send to heaven in order to hear God speaking.

Indeed, there are among us today those who think their religion is pure and spiritual, who think it is an inward communion with an unseen God—but who in practice send someone to heaven to bring the word of God back to them. We must have the fullest respect for the sincerity and devotion of our fellow Christians, the Roman Catholics. But we cannot forget that we are Protestants precisely because we believe God can be near us. We do not accept the dogma that God has one infallible representative on earth—a representative who, alone and unaided, is in touch with heaven, to bring to the rest of us the word of God.

Likewise, we agree with the Deuteronomist when he says: "Neither is the word of God beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?" For God's word does not come to us from a far-away land, and the seat of true religion is not in some divine city or in some favored country. There may be truth that others have discovered which we know not of, and by sharing it with each other we may advance together in the knowledge of God. But we will know that even this is made possible by God's speaking to both of us first before he speaks to one through the other. For just as his word is not too hard for thee, we are told, neither is it far off.

SIMPLICITY OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

On the contrary, we are assured—and here the highest point of the teaching is reached—that "the word of God is very nigh unto thee. It is in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." This is not a physical concept of distance, but a spiritual one. When the scribe indicated to Jesus that he

understood the requirements of true religion, Jesus replied, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." Here, too, is a spiritual conception of the distance or the closeness of God. And the responsibility lies upon man to make the choice to be near God. Moreover, man has power to make that choice.

To be near his God, man must choose that God's word shall be in his mouth. It sounds too simple to say that we must speak nothing but the truth—not more or less. Yet that is all it says. And we are assured that to be honest in speech is as possible as making sacrifices and worshiping idols. It is because we do not choose to be honest in speech that we have to be told so often that we should and can be honest.

A MAN OF PLAIN SPEECH

I suppose that Abraham Lincoln was one of the plainest-speaking men who ever lived. He never sought to conceal or misrepresent what was in his mind to say. On one occasion, when he was running for Congress from Illinois, he attended a revival meeting at which the opposing candidate, the Rev. Mr. Cartwright, was preaching. Near the end of the service, Mr. Cartwright called upon all who desired to lead a new life and go to heaven, to stand. A scattered few stood up. Then all who did not wish to go to hell were asked to stand. This time, no one remained seated save Mr. Lincoln, who thereupon was asked where *he* was going. Lincoln slowly rose and slowly spoke: "I believe in treating religious matters with due solemnity, (and) I admit that the questions propounded by Brother Cartwright are of great importance. (But) I did not feel called upon to answer as the rest did." Then, with his quiet but unfailing humor, Lincoln added: "Brother Cartwright asks me directly where I am going. I desire to reply with equal directness: I am going to Congress."

Fewer words and honest ones are better than many words which we do not intend to support—or cannot support—with action.

IN THE HEART, FIRST OF ALL

Behind words, however, and deeper than words, is the heart of man. And to be near God, man must choose that the word of God shall be in his heart first of all. It is a temptation to say that this means having good intentions. But because we are prone to excuse stupidity if "good" intention seems to be behind it, I should like to use a stronger word—the word "integrity." The man whose heart's purpose is one of integrity is a man not sentimental but loving, not cunning but wise, not calculating but farsighted, not anxious to exploit but eager to be to every man a brother. The trouble is that there are usually conflicting impulses in the heart or intention of men.

In Paul Carroll's play, "Shadow and Substance," the servant girl for Canon Skerritt reveals the canon's contradictory character to the local schoolmaster who hates him. "Oh, I know," says Brigid, "you have the dagger for him because he can hurt and say killin' words . . . you see him when he's proud, but I see him when he's prayin' in his little place and the tears on his cheeks; you see him when he dines, but I see him wh he fasts; you see him when his head is up and fi like a lion, but I see his head when it's down low a his words won't come. . . . It's because of that, t you can hate him and I love him. . . . If we co all see each other all the time in big hangin' mirr the whole hate of the world would turn into dust."

And Brigid is right: if there is true integrity in hearts, and an earnest desire to express it honestly, will have been brought very near to God.

But this means going further, to deeds that ma the desires of the heart and the fine words of speaking. For the word of God "is in thy mo and in thy heart *that thou mayest do it.*" All is nought without action that gives reality to our hea intention. Yet men of every age have failed j here.

THE TEST OF FAITH

In one of Robert Nathan's imaginative novels, *Gently Day,* the necessity of both right intention right action is made very clear. The story cent about a soldier, Henry Arkbester, and a chapl of this war. They are killed in a plane crash, t allowed in death to visit the family of Henry's gre grandparents. As they talk together, Henry says the chaplain: "What puzzles me is how it was all ferent from what I thought. I used to think fo must have known what they wanted. . . . I gues thought that things were simpler in the old days, people were better. I figured that God was clo then; but now I don't think so."

"God has never been any closer to the world," plied the chaplain, "or any further away from it."

"Still," says Henry thoughtfully, "when we pr he seems nearer."

"Those who pray," agreed the chaplain, "draw n through innocence and humility. But those who favors for themselves receive an inscrutable reply."

"I only asked for love," said Henry. The chapl nodded his head. "That is what I mean," he said

The chaplain saw that we must go beyond the ing for love to living by deeds of love, else love not come back to us, nor will God be near to us.

What men of every age have failed to understa we *must* understand, else God will be so far away cannot know him. We must understand that our words and hearts and deeds we make of Go stranger or our divine Companion. The Scots p Robert Burns, once wrote, "They never sought in that sought the Lord aright." Well, *we* seek God in vain if we look for his Word in some of most obvious places. Whether it is in the circle the family, or in our place of work, or in world fairs, we will find God's Word for us in the sim rite of matching deeds to honest words and high sires.

RELIGION is like one of the senses. It is the po of the perfect human being to perceive the ultim values.

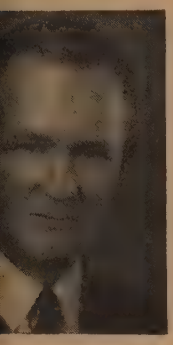
TOYOHIKO KAGAWA

Atomic Energy—and Religion

By Lloyd Ellis Foster

ath made the earth by his power,
ath established the world by his wisdom,
hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.—Jeremiah 51:15.

IAY SEEM very bold in attempting to deal with theme that is so staggering in its importance as natter of the release of atomic energy. Since the ic bombing of Japan, however, men and women ghout the world have asked searching questions as to the bearing this amazing achievement may have upon their outlook on the world, how it affects their religious faith, and how it may pattern the thinking of tomorrow.



A few weeks after the government's disclosure of its atomic research, I sat at dinner with a group of men. An able lawyer, a capable business man, a leading rabbi and myself found ourselves engaged in a serious discussion as to the im- of atomic energy, upon both our understanding ie physical universe and what meaning it would for religious thought and practice. "Why don't as an interpreter of Christianity," the lawyer edly asked me, "preach on the significance atomic gy has for our lives in the years ahead?" This age is an attempted answer—although I confess the attempt is a very modest one.

he truth is that since the word was flashed to a led world that atomic energy had been released mighty instrument of war, you and I have been covering the universe in which we live. Slowly unbelievingly our dull minds are beginning to the miracle of matter. On August 5, 1945, we red upon the Atomic Age. We now stand upon the shold of an era fraught with such tremendous nise or such terrifying peril that our minds cannot p the cosmic sweep of the event. A few years ago of the outstanding religious leaders of America rved that he would rather live during the next nty years than at any time since the world began. t time is here. You and I live during the dawning n age more remarkable than any man has ever vn.

I

EXPLORING THE STRUCTURE OF MATTER

Iore important than the use of the atomic bomb ie human realization that we have gotten at the structure of matter. The striking thing about the ase of atomic energy is that it discloses the basic ce of power in the physical universe. Although it long been known to the scientist, the man on the street has grasped anew the fact that all matter is electrical force. The latter had thought of matter as an inert solid thing. The atomic bomb has dramatized for him the incredible idea that all matter is active, vibrant electrical energy. Every object—the book you read, the flower you admire, the tool you work with, the food you eat—all are forms of seething electrical activity. Suddenly it has been forced upon our slow minds that we are gods, and that the key to the secret power of the universe has been thrust into our fumbling fingers. At last there has been given to us a titanic power with which we may either rebuild our world and enrich our inner lives, or, in our blind greed, pull down the temple of civilization which we have so laboriously built.

Quite unexpectedly, and without intending it ourselves, we have been introduced to the atom. I, myself, must confess to only a very slight acquaintance with the atom. I have hardly been on speaking terms with it. But the focusing of world interest on the release of the atom has forced us all to ask questions about what it is, what the scientist does with it, and what future use will be made of it. Not being a scientist, I can only try to gather up some of their descriptions of it and express them in very halting words. The atom, we are told, is the smallest unit of matter. It can be measured; it can be experimented with. It has a center, so the scientist points out, which is called a nucleus. This center is made up of positive and negative particles of electricity. Thrown around the nucleus is a vaporous circle of electrons. But what dismays lay people like ourselves in the understanding of the atom is its unbelievable smallness. It is so small that man cannot hope to see it. The scientist tells us that the diameter of the nucleus of the atom is two and a half trillionths of an inch. Now for me an inch is a pretty small thing. When I am asked to break it up into trillionths of an inch, I must confess complete failure. Anyway, we must try to see that the atom is so tiny we cannot picture it, and that it is made up of whirling electrical force unceasing in its motion.

What happens when the atomic bomb explodes? Again we are told that the nucleus of the atom is disturbed so it loses its unity and blows up. The scientist is able to break down the power of cohesion whereby the nucleus is held together. Losing its "togetherness," the atom explodes itself and passes on its disturbance to other atoms which explode. The release of atomic energy, says the scientist, is the result of the progressive disintegration of the atom.

We are trying to see what is the larger significance of atomic energy. True, atomic energy skillfully directed can destroy our cities and our bodies. But what does it do to our minds? How does it affect our ideas, our thinking of the universe which houses such titanic energies? Surely it forces us to this central conclusion: *The universe is alive with energy.* "Dynamite lurks," one writer comments, "in every particle of dust." The stuff God has used to shape the physical universe is electrical energy as fast moving and powerful as a bolt of lightning. The atom with its pulsing powers is but the universe in miniature. The mystery of creation

takes on new meaning as we sense God's matchless use of these dynamic forces. The words of Jeremiah seem strangely modern as we glimpse the wonder of our God:

> He hath made the world by his power,
> He hath established the world by his wisdom,
> And hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.

No longer can we think of creation as a finished task. The masterful hand of a sovereign Being is needed to keep in check the explosive energies which reach to the very corners of the universe. Our eyes have been opened to the hidden truth of the psalmist's declaration:

> The heavens declare the glory of God;
> And the firmament sheweth his handiwork.

And as our wonder grows as to God's cosmic control of a universe which totters on the edge of explosion, we suddenly realize that this vast universe is the framework of our lives. Within its pulsating forces we shape our lives now, and we hope to do so in the ages to come. Faith alone enables us to whisper prayerfully with the poet:

> Lovely is Thy universe, O Lord;
> Teach us to be unafraid of the vastness that lies
> About us, and above us in Thy skies.

It is well to recall in passing that the thrust of the skeptic has always been at the point of the invisibility of God. "How can you believe in a being," the skeptic has taunted us, "whom you cannot see?" But now science asks us to believe in an atom we cannot see. John declared, "No man hath seen God at any time." Science declares that no one has seen an atom at any time. Science, like religion, rests its central affirmation on that which cannot be seen! The "invisibles" seem to be coming into their own.

II

WHAT MEANING HAS ATOMIC ENERGY FOR RELIGION?

Recently I heard an American general analyze the causes of Germany's defeat in the air. Germany lost the war in the air, he insisted, for lack of an adequate military concept. Successful in ground warfare, she was not able to grasp the essential principles of aerial combat. Germany lost for lack of an *adequate concept*. The failure of the Christian church during the centuries to transform the life of the world may be due to the lack of an adequate concept of God. The early Christians, fresh from their contact with the magnetic personality of Jesus, believed that God was immediate and powerful. They had his aid in everything. The Christian cause was a cooperative partnership with God. They dared defy an emperor, challenge the pagan world, face the torture of the dungeon and the arena, because God with his inexhaustible resources stood by their side.

We modern Christians, however, have no such resolute faith. Our religion too often is a convenience, not a conviction. For many Christians God is an oversized man, a shadowy aloof presence mildly concerned with our human happenings. May it not be that a partial grasp of atomic energy may enlarge for us o concept of God? Should we not conclude that ba of this mysterious universe which is alive with thr bing forces, there is an active, directing Intelligence God? Will not our idea of God be stretched to n meaning, as we realize that creation was not a sin act in the long dead past, but that it is an ongoi process? Jesus declared: "My father worketh hither and I work." Shall we not take new heart in kindling realization that God is at work now, at wo for us and with us?

A further meaning which may emerge in connect with the startling import of atomic energy is deepening of our conviction of the primacy of spi over matter. When the trial bomb was exploded New Mexico, there was placed near by a steel tow one hundred feet in height. After the bomb had be released, the scientists discovered that the heat a pressure were so great during the explosion that steel tower had mysteriously dissolved. Most of us not accustomed to seeing matter disappear. We th of it as enduring. True, we have been taught t matter cannot be destroyed, although the combinat of atoms may be changed. The elusiveness of matt dramatized by the atomic explosion in New Mexi suggests, by way of analogy, that the enduring real of the universe is invisible and intangible. Mat disappears; the spirit abides. "It is the spirit t quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing." The essent thing about us is not the body. It is only a tempor house which will and should disappear. The cent thing about us is the mind: our capacity to experien our awareness of truth and reality presented to us no visible form; our godlike power to seize and inbu into our lives that which cannot be seen or touched

Our rediscovery of the dynamic nature of the u verse we live in should, I have already suggest stretch our conception of God. If this be true, th prayer takes on new dimensions. Prayer never reac a higher level in our experience than our idea of G If our idea of God be provincial and narrow, pra will be either perfunctory or trivial. If, on the ot hand, we sense the greatness and power of G prayer will be expectant and purposeful.

The release of atomic energy suggests to the Ch tian that back of this display of cosmic energy i directing Being who not only creates the universe sustains it. The Christian is led to believe that if G is able to handle physical energies so ably, he is a able to respond to us. Is it not reasonable to assu that if God is all-powerful, he is also all-wise? Pra takes on added meaning as we sense the skillful di tion of God with both atoms and persons.

For a long time many have denied the claims Christianity because, they said, it asked the mind accept beliefs which were hard to explain. These liefs, it was asserted, contained so much mystery t the thinking modern could not accept them. Now the light of recent atomic discoveries, men everywh are asked to accept beliefs in the realm of physics wh seem incredible. Is there anything we are called u

elieve more mysterious than the release of atomic gy? No longer should we lightly dismiss the cross use it is a mystery. Dare we any longer dismiss spiritual truth because we cannot understand all plies?

here is no person living who fully understands the ture of matter. If God operates so mysteriously in the framework of matter, should we expect to work less mysteriously in dealing with per- ity? And if God, as Christian tradition claims, led himself in the historic Jesus, we should ex- both the event and the meaning to be too deep our surface-trained minds to grasp. For here God ls not the hidden powers of the atom, but the en processes of his mind and the divine qualities of y and love which our earth-bound minds can ely glimpse. Never again should anyone say that ejects the cross as a great central Christian truth use he cannot understand it.

here is another meaning. It has to do with the beyond. Many people have cast aside any belief future life because it seemed both unreal and dull. have caught from the past the idea that the e life is one of monotonous inaction in a static en where boredom could be the only possible re- Our rediscovery of the physical universe suggests the possibility of a life beyond that will be varied pression and unending in growth and understand- We are not doomed citizens of a dead universe. er we are immortal citizens of a living universe. ive unendingly in such a universe, a universe so d and so complex, could only give lure and fas- ion to personal existence. Our minds cannot ex- t the wonders of the physical world which is un- ng. Is there any physicist who has exhausted his of inquiry? No; he knows that he has only hed the border of matter, has only grasped the entary truths of his field. Is there any musician has exhausted the possibilities of musical expres- ? No; the master musician dies knowing that he received only a preliminary training in the art of c. The life beyond acquires added attraction as ealize that this vast and unexplored universe is to ur home; that the God who planned the miracle he atom has planned new surprises for the soul.

III

HUMANITY STANDS AT THE CROSSROAD OF MORAL DECISION

he release of atomic energy raises the awesome tion as to what use we shall make of it. Shall we it as an instrument of war? If we do so, it may to global destruction. Or shall we use it as an ument of peace? There is a policeman at 23rd t and Fifth avenue in New York city whom I known many years. When I stop to talk with I feel quite safe although traffic swirls about us. other day I asked him what he thought of atomic gy. He replied that we can and should use these t forces to lighten the tasks of the world, and to g security and safety to all peoples. We can make this world, my policeman friend insisted, a good place in which to live.

Yes, we can make this world a good place in which to live, if we can reshape our thinking. Someone has said very pointedly that "the real problem is not the atomic bomb, but the nature of man." Here is the essence of our problem—the cruel, greedy nature of man. A recent editorial which has evoked much comment bore the caption, "Modern Man is Obsolete." What the writer sought to convey is that as a race we have a provincial world view. Both our ideas and our behavior are geared to the limitations of a pre-atomic age. We think of humanity in terms of racial segments when we should think of it as a brotherhood. Atomic energy has shocked us into the realization that there must be, as someone has suggested, "one world or none at all."

What is needed, above all else, to make sure that these undreamed of powers will be used constructively? The deepening of moral conviction! Only a moral cohesiveness can hold our world together in the grave years ahead. The moral sense, for which I plead, cannot come from within our own natures. It stems from God. It is renewed within us as we seek God's forgiveness for the past, and pledge ourselves to walk humbly with our God in the future. The moral character of men and women like ourselves will determine whether atomic energy will be a sinister curse or a healing blessing.

Today the peoples of the world stand on the brink of a yawning chasm. Either we shall slip into that chasm to be broken and destroyed by our collective wickedness, or we will build a cooperative bridge over it which will lead to a new day of mutual understanding and social helpfulness.

God comes when we need him. He is about us all the time, but he reveals his nearness in our time of need. When we commence the journey we may not be able to see how we shall get through with it. But to doubt would be disloyalty, to falter would be sin. God wants us to go in our own strength as far as we can go, and then trust him for the rest. We are responsible just as far as he gives us strength and light. After that we must wait for him.

Clarence E. Macartney.

Socialism begins at the wrong end. You cannot organize anything until you have individuals. . . . Socialism begins to regulate the world away from itself. You must make yourself right before the world around you can be made right.

Leo Tolstoy.

Progress is not automatic; the world grows better because people wish that it should be and take the right steps to make it better. If things are ever to move forward, some man or woman must be willing to take the first steps and assume the risks.

Jane Addams.

Wherein Is Our Hope?

By John Clarence Petrie

Thus saith Jehovah: Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah. . . . Blessed is the man who trusteth in Jehovah, and whose trust Jehovah is. Jeremiah 17:5, 7.

Your patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 1:3.

THE Old Testament prophet preached constantly against the nation's putting its confidence in men, princes, arms, pacts. Israel belonged to Jehovah in a peculiar manner: if they would place their trust in him all would be well. In the New Testament it is God in Christ who is the Christian's hope. The prophets had at heart the welfare of the nation; the apostles were concerned with the personal salvation of individuals.

It is worth noting that a division exists in American Judaism today comparable to that between nationalist Judaism in the first century of our era and the universalism of the Christian heresy. The Zionist movement follows the line of the Judaism that rejected Christ, whereas the non-Zionist Jews are repudiating nationalism in favor of the personal religion which, *absente Christo,* marked early Christianity. But neither Judaism nor Christianity has stood still. Each has come to have a passionate devotion to a salvation not only of all men as individuals but of the social order itself. Unless the two religions are to reject their sources of inspiration they must still preach to the world that its hope lies not in men, but in Jehovah God and in God in Christ.

A STUMBLING BLOCK?

To some, perhaps to most Jews and Christians, this word is without scandal. But more and more it becomes to the great unchurched public a stumbling block. It smacks of a do-nothing attitude toward problems we should try to solve; it sounds to them like a lazy man's way of evading responsibility; it seems based on a prescientific notion of a deity who can be badgered into intervention in the working of the laws of nature and of the moral realm. What prayers must have gone up in concentration camps, what rosaries recited, what masses celebrated, what offices of the Breviary read, what communions made by good Christians trusting in a God of love! But the tyrant's hand was not stopped until it was actually paralyzed by the power of a tardily awakened world. Whether there is a God or not, it is obvious that if wars are ever to be stopped men must stop them. From the first creation of the universe, God has had to show that he is worthy of human trust. What is the score? He would not even intervene to save the One who trusted h most—that agonizing Man crying from his torture Calvary: "My God, my God, why hast thou f saken me?"

Perhaps the first point to be made is that by trust God our religion does not mean and never has mea lying down and taking whatever comes. Even as t prophets thundered about the sovereign will of Jehov they also condemned the unsocial conduct of princ priests and people. Why preach against such sins if preacher did not expect the hearer to do someth besides pray? Why hold up the Torah before people's eyes if they were not obeying it in actio Why should Christ have done any of his penetrat teaching if he did not expect some at least to ce making the outside of the cup the limit of their effo if he did not expect some at least to visit the si clothe the naked, and give a cup of cold water some little one? Those long nights of prayer en long days of preaching and were the beginning of s other days of preaching. Whatever has been meant trusting God rather than man, it looks as if our ligion has placed a considerable amount of confide in human beings.

WHAT DOES RELIGION SAY TODAY?

Perhaps another argument might take the form o *tu quoque.* Jeremiah's cry that a man could not e trust his own brother seemed to have much rea behind it. Even that Christ who taught the div sonship of all men had to warn his disciples agai casting their pearls before swine lest they find swine turning and rending them. What to do with secret of the atom bomb? And if the Lord God not intervened to make a peaceful and just world, w has man accomplished in several thousand years justify the humanist hope? Always there has b the cry that the race would really rise if the foot the priests were once removed from the necks of people. Did the priests foment nazism?

What is it our religion would say to us today? H should we apply the warnings against trusting in m We may say truthfully, "Put not your trust in versal military training." It did not prevent the world wars. What if it makes us military mind What if it sets up a tyranny whereby the governm can put down any attempt of the people to free th selves by at once ordering the youth of the nation arms as Briand once ended a general strike in Fran Military service found France unprepared for the r hordes. Military service did not create the Magi Line-mindedness of the French generals. Peacet conscription is an instrument for a possible good; and also for a possible evil. This is not to say that religion categorically forbids the year of military tr ing which the army and navy ask of each young m in America. What it says is, "Do not put your t in it!" Of itself it is no sure defense.

Again our religion speaks to us today and s "Put not your trust in one world government." Einstein has made an eloquent plea for it as the o means whereby we can be safe from mutual dest

in the atomic age; three men, representing Russia, in and America, should draw up a constitution world state. Mortimer Adler, before the atom , wrote that there could be no peace as long as was national sovereignty. Seeing that men would urrender sovereignty in our time, he thought it d take another five hundred years of world wars e there could be only one political unit on our .

POLITICAL UNITY MAY BE FUTILE

is conceivable that Mr. Adler is right. It is y certtain that the world government will not immediately. When it does come it is likely that ll bring an end to large scale war since there will be but one political power in control of the means aking war. Then what? Will it be the Kingdom od on earth? Or will it be the most frightful utism in history? With army, navy, atom bombs, s, courts and police, a highly centralized authority suppress every movement for freedom of ex- on, every political and economic dissent, every ral and religious heresy. The prophets and Christ ot forbid the one world which would prevent wars render the atom bomb safe. What they do say is, not your trust in one world government as such." ır religion cries out, "Put not your trust in a re- d church." The church unity of the Middle Ages example of what might be repeated—uniformity ced by an inquisition. Or if you prefer, Catholics yred in London; Roger Williams driven from achusetts. Christian sectarianism and disunity are ing scandal. Yet we must not put our hope in rganization. We should work for it. We should umenically minded. We should cease the ridicu- practice of starting a new schism every time we new idea. But a reunited church without the of Christ would be a greater agency for harm the present dividedness which is after all but a ndex of our own sinfulness.

WHERE, THEN, IS OUR HOPE?

God will not do the work that we think needs done, and if we ourselves do not seem able to what then? Where is our hope? God and Christ till our hope. When the Corinthian converts of Paul were disputing among themselves as to the ive merits of the apostle and Apollos, Paul wrote em: "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God the increase." Man must plant, man must water, neither the planting nor the watering contains our The physician diagnoses and prescribes; the cares for the patient; but the work of healing is n them.

einhold Niebuhr reminds us constantly that every an project carries within itself the seed of its own uction. Yet man must continue his projects. The has not made the world safe, yet the world would had no chance for peace had we failed to resist. ay be that every one of our endeavors will fail. re may never be peace, nor justice; yet we may not striving for them. The physician may not cease his work although ultimately all his patients must die. The attempt to prevent death lengthens the span of life and improves the health of the world. Final issues are not in our hands, yet we do not omit laboring for their solution. Each minute of the day those who have labored and whose labors have failed to reach their goal are crossing over into the life beyond, where our religion teaches us that the goodness of God will be vindicated and Christ's way justified.

'THIS IS OUR FAITH!'

Our hope is in what the prophets have told us about the nature of God. Our hope is in what Jesus has told us about God, and above all in what his own life has demonstrated of God. To the modern man it is difficult to quote texts and set out concise creedal statements. The youth representatives of several Christian denominations found it impossible to agree upon a form of words. Suddenly one of their number walked to the front of the room and set up before them a picture. It was Sallman's Head of Christ. "That," said he, "is what we agree on. That is our faith." At once the tension was broken. They all be-

Timely Verse

The Old Year's Prayer

GOD of the seasons, hear my parting prayer,
Faint on the frosty air:
Let the New Year take up the work I leave,
And finish what I weave;
Give to the troubled nations lasting peace,
The harvest's yield increase;
Help the bereaved their sorrows to endure,
Care for the old and poor.
Bid him give patience to all those in pain,
And to the parched fields rain;
Protect the fledgling in its little nest,
See that the weary rest;
And when the midnight bells from tower and town
Send their sweet message down,
Bring faith in God, a beacon in the night
To guide mankind aright.

MINNA IRVING.

The New Year

STANDING with folded wings of mystery,
The New Year waits to greet us—you and me.

Her arms are full of gifts, her feet are shod
All fitly for rough roads or velvet sod;
Her eyes are steady with belief in God.

Her voice falls sweetly as a vesper bell
Where trust and hope all lesser notes dispel;
Scarce knowing why, we feel that all is well.

She smiles a little ere she turns away,
Breathing a promise for each coming day;
And we—we pause a little while to pray.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

lieved *in* him although they could not agree *about* him. Without that which was in him nothing that human beings do can begin to accomplish its purpose. If all men were his true disciples we should know that nothing could fail for want of the proper spirit in its operation. World governments are a device to do with unconverted men what converted men would do anyhow without the device.

Will all men ever be converted to Christ's way? It is too much to hope. But the Christian church has had laid upon it no other task than this impossible task of making all men, including its own members, true disciples. In this alone is there hope.

What of Jews—must they accept him? Not in so many words, though it is hard to believe Judaism would long remain aloof if Christians became Christians. What of Unitarians—must they accept the Nicene creed? Not in so many words. They are damaged souls—for the most part damaged by the behavior of those whose belief was orthodox but whose lives were not. "Not every man that saith unto me, Lord, Lord; but he that doeth the will of my Father." He has answered the question himself.

Nevertheless, those who place Christ first by creed may not relent. He has again given the answer. "This ye should have not done and not left the other undone," were his words when confronted with the externals and inner heart of the Law. Theirs is not to deny the creeds; but in the creeds is not their hope. Nor in the letter, but in the spirit. The function of the creeds is to keep Christ alive in the thoughts of men. He cannot save until he is in their hearts.

God Knows All

A COMMUNION MEDITATION

By James E. Bell

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater th our heart, and knoweth all things. 1 John 3:20.

THE Lord's Supper is the central memorial of churches. For nearly two thousand years it been bringing Memorial Days to those who bear name. The Communion is suffused with spirit memories.

In celebrating the Lord's Supper we can never f get that the first followers received it in life's c founding and in what must have seemed to them blackout of the future. As they went on into increasi turmoil, it became a soul-shelter. Because fratern is functional in the Holy Communion, it generates gc will. At his table, as at Christ's cross, discernment o common human need makes all men one. Over Lord's Table broods the invisible, eternal Christ. C beholding him waits only on the seeing eye of the so Also, the Lord's Supper is a challenge to conscien When the Master aroused this slumbering monitor his weary followers on the eve of his betrayal, ev disciple cried, "Lord, is it I?"

For such a time of tumult there is a seldom quo and an easily misunderstood text which comes home us: "If our heart condemn us, God is greater th our heart, and knoweth all things." If these wo stood alone, they might be construed as condemnati

A Pastoral Prayer

By James Croswell Perkins

ETERNAL FATHER of our spirits, again we come to this our place of common worship to lift our minds and hearts to new levels of faith through prayer and praise. Again we seek communion with Thy Spirit. Again we gather to be instructed and renewed by the mind of Christ. Deeply we feel the need of more than human resources of spiritual strength if we are to live up to life during these days of confusion. So we come seeking Thee. We thank Thee that when we seek after Thee with sincerity of heart we find that Thou in Thy turn hast been seeking after us.

Humbly we pray for forgiveness and cleansing. Pardon us for all our wrongdoing, especially for our offenses against Thy holy law of love. Forgive our lack of patience and understanding. Pardon our hasty speech, our censorious judgments, our readiness to criticize. Make us more humble, more gentle. Forgive us when we have not acted like true followers of Jesus. Help us to do what is right when the right may be hard and costly.

Enlarge Thou the circle of our interests and sympathies. Broaden our horizons. Deepen our conviction of the worth of our Christian faith. Cleanse us from the poisons of hatred, bitterness and prejudi Strengthen our faith in the power of intelligent gc will.

Be with every family represented here this morni Some of us are burdened with household duties and constant pressure of work in offices and factories. M we not be overwhelmed by feelings of drudgery find new meaning in our labors through fellows with the Christ of Common Folk. Some of us are pressed with anxieties for loved ones at home, oth for dear ones and friends in distant places. Give u strong and courageous faith to meet the future w serene confidence in Thine overarching love and ca Some have been disappointed. When cherished pl and hopes have been spoiled, may we find comfort the power of the human spirit to triumph throu divine help. Some of us lack a buoyant, hopeful fa in the reality of things unseen. Strengthen our co dence, we beseech Thee, in the ultimate triumph Thy purposes for us.

So may we go forth to meet the experiences o new week and a new year with a peace and stability mind which nothing can snatch away. All this we in the Master's name. Amen.

upport for such a construction might be found in wn judgments. When our hearts condemn us, the cient God, transcending our imperfect knowledge, ondemn us so much the more. Thus we rise from ndoing study of ourselves to meet the severer ny of God.

t when we view this text with its context (con- g a lyric on Christ's illimitable love), we are aded of better things. If overborne by dismay and st, we do well to turn to the all-knowing God. he that has made us and not we ourselves." He s us altogether, what we have forgotten and all ve have never known. It is he that dwells in the beyond the clouds of ignorance that envelop us. n we think of him we say with blessed assurance, ll were known, all would be forgiven"—and he s all. Unquestionably that is the teaching of this and there come times when we are in desperate of its healing truth. We fall back upon the con- n that this omniscient God is love; that he know- verything will pardon everything in the infinite ce of Christ. In the fullness of a knowing, caring mforting God we find our peace.

APPEALING TO MEMORY

le students have said that this text is reminiscent; it recalls "a beautiful scene beside the lake of ee in the dear dead days beyond recall." There asked of Simon Peter: "Simon, son of Jonas, thou me?" Simon made answer: "Yea, Lord, knowest that I love thee." Only a short time be- however, Simon had denied three times; and as times Jesus put to him this question which ied his soul. A week earlier, in an hour of des- ion, the great apostle had forsaken his Leader. gave Simon not a word of condemnation but only x (and do you think you would have discovered mnation in that look?), whereupon Simon went nto the night, and wept. When therefore Jesus this question of Simon, the disciple had nothing and on. He could not find refuge in his word, e pledged. That he had broken as if it were straw. ories trooping out of his vivid past brought no lation. Conscience cried out against him and his condemned him. In his extremity he threw him- at last upon the infinite knowledge of Christ: u knowest all things, thou knowest that I love ' These words, fragrant with the last best hope, n in significance and cast a revealing reflection our text, "For if our heart condemn us, God is er than our heart, and knoweth all things."

IN TIMES OF TENSION

e need such truth, moreover, in the tenseness of hard times. Overwork and broken hours of sleep hen the darkness and multiply the anxieties which crowding upon the usual hours of rest. In a d of convulsed civilization, Christian people may their consciences more acute. That of itself might holesome, provided they do not descend into the d mood of self-accusing.

the Song of Solomon there is a vivid picture of the fears that beset an Eastern king. Sixty men of valor stand about his bed to ease his nightly fear. But one does not need to be an Eastern king to know the paralysis of fear or to feel the thrust of condemnation. Troubles which we can see clear-cut—daytime troubles—are bearable; but dim and shadowy and ill defined anxieties unbalance and overwhelm us in the night. The uncertainties of tomorrow, the disturbed futures of our children, what we shall do when all the foundations seem to be crumbling under our feet—these drive us to the edge of despair. Then it is that we do well not to surrender to any inward-turning judgment or to succumb to the torture of a self-accusing conscience. "For, if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."

A HIGH PRIVILEGE

There is another season of the soul when we are well advised not to yield to self-condemnation, and that is the hour of spiritual illumination such as we may find in the observance of the Lord's Supper. You will recall that scripture scene in which Simon had toiled all night, and to no useful purpose. On Christ's direction the reluctant Simon found the nets so filled that they were about to break. Confronted by such results and faced by the wonderful goodness of Jesus, Peter was so conscience-stricken and ashamed that he cried, "Depart from me, Lord, I am a sinful man."

It is not for me to speak for you when surprised by an undeserved kindness, but I can say for myself that at such a time the sense of unworthiness is overwhelming. The past week an experience like that has overtaken me. A friend of more than twenty-five years ago, with a few interchanges since, came into a situation where he might serve me in a most desirable way, and with what eagerness there was no mistaking. It was on my part both humbling and enabling. There was a joyous re-evaluation of this friend, almost lost from thought and for whom, in three decades, I had done nothing beyond a casual kindness. In the same mail with word to him went a handful of letters to men known to me as working under terrific difficulties with seldom a word of a brother's understanding.

GOD IS GREATER THAN OUR HEART

At the Lord's Table we are poignantly aware of the love that will not let us go. From such unearned and unrequited love it would be natural enough to turn to self-accusing and find a condemning heart. "The verdict of a desponding heart is the most worthless verdict in the world." This is just the time to rest our spirits in the eternal Father, knowing that "if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." He knoweth that we have not so much followed as faltered, and that for Christ's infinite love and mercy we have made utterly inadequate response. He knoweth that we are not satisfied; that we have not attained but we aspire. He knoweth that we hunger and thirst after righteousness. We lift up our hearts to him, casting our fearful spirits upon his omniscient love. "The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

Preaching and Religion Today

By John Haynes Holmes

(Continued from last month)

ARE there other obstacles in the path of preaching these days? There are! One takes us deeper into life than we have yet gone—into the field of ethics and the problem of the relativity of morals.

One of the amazing phenomena of our time is the fading, even in some places the disappearance, of our moral sensibilities. The liquidation of standards, the deflation of values! I can remember the time, strange as it may seem, when there were absolutes in human life, like fixed stars in the firmament. These absolutes concerned fundamentally the eternal distinction between right and wrong. This distinction pertained to the very structure of the cosmos. It held together the world of human relations. It was therefore immutable, irrefragable. It allowed of no exceptions, reservations or repudiations. It could no more be suspended or diverted in its operations than the law of gravitation. It was final—like Thomas Carlyle's "Everlasting Yea" and "Everlasting Nay," which he described as "the deep, silent, rock-foundation" of reality.

The sources of this moral absolute were variously traced. Some found it in God, and the commandments of his holy will. Some thought of it as an intuition of the reason—the voice of conscience in the soul of man. Others sought and found it in history—in the lessons wrought out by man in his hard-won experience of fortune and misfortune. Still others identified it with the reign of law which prevails as universally and inexorably in the moral as in the material realm. Thus Wordsworth, in his "Ode to Duty," defines the workings of the physical universe in moral terms when he declares that it is Duty which "dost preserve the stars from wrong." In the same way, Theodore Parker defines the workings of the moral universe in physical terms when he asserts that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." But whatever the explanation, or interpretation, there still remains the absolute—the values that do not change, the standards which do not shift. "Right is right, since God is God."

● *No Standards—Only 'Situations'*

But all this is now gone! The absolute has yielded place in our time to the relative, the ideal to the real. We do not recognize standards that hold from place to place, or values that endure from time to time, through all eternity. There are today only situations — and conduct which varies in relation to the character and impact of these situations! What is improper at one place and time may very well be proper at another place and time. Like the play of a quarter-back in football, it all depends upon conditions. And since every condition, in relation to a person, involves interests that are favorable or unfavorable to that person, it soon becomes clear that whatsoever action will serve our personal interests is naturally the action that we should take. So that conduct, from the relative point of view, tends steadily to degenerate, until at last the only rule of life is to do what pleases us, profits us, prospers us. And why not, if there is no universal and eternal principle by which in the end all things are judged? The prophet Amos, in his ancient day, used to talk about a plumb-line, and how, if we would build our lives to stand, we must raise them true to this line held straight to the perpendicular by the pull of the universe itself. But this was long ago and far away. Why go to plumb-lines in Palestine for our instruction in America today?

● *From Absolutism to Relativism*

I wish I had opportunity to tell what this shift from absolutism to relativism in the field of morals has done to our age. It has brought upon us disasters which range all the way from the ruination of youthful lives to the corruption of cultures and the collapse of civilization. But my theme is preaching, and I must content myself with pointing out what a relativist philosophy of life has done, and is doing, to prophetic utterance. Is it not plain that it has stripped such utterance of its dignity, robbed it of its power, and denuded it of its authority? For in a universe of shifting standards, and no values at all, these qualities of great preaching are as debased as a paper currency without a gold reserve. If there is no absolute in the field of ethics, then is a sermon nothing more or better than a corporation report discussing what may be profitable or unprofitable for the stockholders to do. A preacher, if he can lay down no law of eternal right—what can he do but babble, like old Polonius, on "Why day is day, night night, and time is time"—there accomplishing nothing ". . . bu waste night, day, and time."

● *Commonplace Preach Made N*

The pulpit had dignity when i clared, "Abhor that which is cleave to that which is good." pulpit had power when it prophe "The wages of sin is death." pulpit had authority when it d to say, "Thus saith the Lord." T were the great days of preachi when, in the words of Theo Parker, the preacher was conce with "the truths of absolute relig Daily he climbed Sinai, to re afresh the tables of the law. We on the holy day, he mounted the pit, to proclaim the law that he learned, and to affirm, "This do, thou shalt live." This was a wi to eternal law which is the bus of preaching—and it made preaching. Nay, it did more! transfigured commonplace preac into something noble and sublim

A few months ago there eme from a nazi concentration cam Germany a famous and revered ure—that of Pastor Martin möller. For eight years this min of God had been the prisone Adolf Hitler. Until the adver the Fuehrer, there had been no remarkable about Niemöller. preacher, he had no special re tion. Then came the attempt of ler to subdue the churches of Reich, and subject them to his Hitler proposed that the cross sh be lifted from the altars of C and the swastika raised in its p Here was a situation to which möller might easily have adapted self. Why not accept the nazi and abandon all imperatives those of expediency? But this p had something of the old ma within his soul. Perhaps he re bered another and earlier M who had defied an emperor, bec he could "do no other." In any he refused to bow the knee to Ca And his reward was arrest, impr ment and torture.

● *'Faithful to Heavenly Vis*

Now I have in my library a lection of Martin Niemöller's mons preached during this terrifi riod. The first of these sermons delivered on New Year's, 1933, a few weeks before Hitler cam

. The last is dated June 27, These sermons, as mere ser- are commonplace. They have miletical distinction of any kind. are characterized by no origi- of thought or vision. They are ned by no beauty of phrase or it insight of the spirit. They ief, uninspired, and occasionally xamples of traditional scripture ns of our time. They are docu- which will be remembered long other utterances are forgotten. ll because there pervades these ns in every part the atmosphere ral idealism. We feel in them resence of a personality who is unfaithful to the heavenly ." We hear the confession of ve and humble man who is ready e death for his convictions which he commandments of God im- upon his soul. Like ships upon de, the quite ordinary sermons emöller are lifted by the inflow- vaters of the spirit, and made endent in authority and power.

● *The Truth of Humanism —and Its Perils*

e more thought and I am done! uld refer, in closing, to human- and its effect upon preaching, I regard as unfortunate. humanism, let me hasten to say, not at this moment mean that ening consciousness of the inner ities of man's life which pro- literature, nurtures culture, and nduced every flowering of intel- l and spiritual genius from the of Pericles to the period of the issance. In this sense I boast f a humanist, and my religion a nistic faith. For I find religion d in human nature. To think of on as supernatural, and thus as raculous bestowal from without, begin at the wrong end. If we o know anything about religion, nust start with man, and what scovers within himself, and de- s out of himself, in his contacts the infinite and eternal dimen- of the universe. But man is not whole—only that part of the e which we most surely know! thousand ways he reaches beyond elf to something higher implicit n himself. And this is God! I humanist, in other words, who no contradiction between human- nd theism, but sees rather in the he fulfillment and completion of ther.

, the humanist I have in mind is discussion of preaching is the inaire who sets up his closed m of thought as a negation of He is the humanist whose ideas a shabby, second-hand sample of gnosticism of the nineteenth cen- Beginning his religion with he ends it at the same place, ng nothing beyond this creature, who lives a few years and dies forever, to kindle his imagination or extend his vision. Confusing superstition with faith, he loses the latter with the swift passing of the former. Matthew Arnold, in his poem "Dover Beach," describes how he heard in his time the "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" of the Sea of Faith,

"Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world."

This is the landscape of the humanist as a kind of salvagemonger haunting these "naked shingles," all unmindful of the great ocean of eternal being which ebbs only in due time to flood back again from the exhaustless deeps of God.

Well, it is this type of humanist, the negating type, I have in mind when I speak of the unfortunate effects of humanism upon modern preaching. For how can there be any great preaching without God? What reservoirs of inspiration are there to be tapped, if the life of man be cut off from the feeding wellsprings of the divine? The preacher, says Phillips Brooks, is a messenger, "a courier who hurries in, breathless, to bring you a message." What if he comes not from afar, and bears no message?

I was invited once to contribute some hymns to a humanist hymnal which was in course of preparation. I sent on the best I had. But I was told that my hymns were unacceptable because they apostrophized or made reference to God. Whereupon I went through the classic hymnals of the church to find what would be left upon this basis of selection—and beyond a few didactic poems and a patriotic hymn or two, there was nothing. We must get along without "O God our help in ages past," "Lord of all being throned afar," and "A mighty fortress is our God."

● *Literature Without 'Living Water'*

Apply this standard to the Bible, and what is left? In the Old Testament, *The Song of Songs,* most of *Ecclesiastes,* the book of *Proverbs,* the bloodthirsty book of *Esther,* and *Ruth* if you omit its noblest passage. The Psalms, the Prophets, the great historical books, all cast aside. In the New Testament, a few parables and episodes in the Gospels, and some brief moralistic passages from the Epistles. Nothing more! Is it any wonder that the Bible has disappeared from many of our humanist pulpits?

Or turn to English poetry, the greatest body of literary inspiration since "the glory that was Greece"—and how much of it is non-theistic? The early indiscretions of Shelley, the cynicism of Byron, the hedonism of Fitzgerald, the skepticism of Thomas Hardy, the pessimism of A. E. Housman, the decadence of Oscar Wilde—and what else? Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, Johnson, the metaphysical poets, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Emerson, Whitman, Lowell—all these ruled out! So little of the incalculable riches of English poetry at the disposal of the humanist! I tell you, his soul is going to run dry early, and the souls of those to whom he ministers will gasp for living water.

● *When the 'Accent of the Holy Ghost' Passes*

All this has to do with preaching—and a lot to do with it! For preaching, as I have reminded you, is the "communication of truth by man to men." But what if truth be pared down to the bone? What if it be unclothed of its fair integument of the flesh? What if the channels of its life be choked up, and the sources of its strength be cut off? What is the most gifted of preachers to do with such body of truth, which is more like a mummy than a living person? The impoverishment of language, if nothing more, is appalling. Then there is the impoverishment of thought—the pedestrian ideas which are forever trying to lift themselves by their own bootstraps instead of with wings. As for imagination, sublimation, exaltation—where are they, or whence do they come, apart from the contemplation of the divine? Humanism, such as I have described it, reduces everything to its lowest terms, whereas it is the genius of religion, it seems to me, to raise everything to its highest terms. The language, the thought, the vision, the passion are all lacking. The "accent of the Holy Ghost," to use Emerson's phase, is not in it.

● *Ambassadors of the Most High*

Preaching, to recover its old power, must recover its old estate. The preacher, to recover his old influence, must recover his old authority. He must understand his errand as an ambassador of the Most High. When he stands in his pulpit, he must feel like Milton sitting at his desk. You remember how, when the great Puritan poet prepared to dictate the text of "Paradise Lost," he invoked the aid of the "heavenly muse" to his "adventurous song," "that with no middle flight intends to soar."

Then he lifted up his heart to the Holy Spirit and he prayed for his poem, as the preacher should pray for his sermon—

"Instruct me, for Thou know'st . . .
What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support,
That, to the height of this great argument,
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."

• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

AS MINISTER of the City Temple in London, Rev. LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD has become internationally known. His church, which was founded in 1640, lost its building by bombing during the war; now, sharing a nearby Anglican sanctuary, Dr. Weatherhead ministers to a reduced but active membership. During the First World War he handled political relations with Arab tribes in the Middle East, and later spent two years as a pastor in India. Among his many books are *The Will of God, This Is the Victory* and *In Quest of a Kingdom.*

Last January Rev. HOOVER RUPERT became director of the youth department of the Methodist Board of Education. His higher education was received at Baker and Boston universities and at Boston U's School of Theology, where he was awarded his S.T.B. *cum laude.* He pursued graduate studies at Northwestern U., Garrett Biblical Institute and Union Seminary. He is an accomplished poet. His father, Rev. Lynn H. Rupert, is now pastor of Central Avenue Methodist Church in Kansas City, Kan.

A year ago Rev. VICTOR M. RHEIN *left Pilgrim* Congregational Church, Oak Park, Ill., to assume the pastorate of the Pilgrim Church in Pomona, Calif. In earlier years he was assistant minister at Broadway Tabernacle, New York city, and minister of First Congregational Church, South Norwalk, Conn. He received his B.D. degree from Union Theological Seminary.

Since 1930 Rev. ALLAN KNIGHT CHALMERS been minister of Broadway Tabernacle, New York. I ing his entire career he has been a leader in such org zations as the American Civil Liberties Union, the lowship of Reconciliation, the Religion and Labor Fou tion, the Association for the Advancement of Col People, etc. He has been consistently opposed to

For about four years Rev. LLOYD ELLIS FO has ministered at the Old First Church (Presbyteri Newark, N. J. Earlier pastorates were in Syrac N. Y., and East Orange, N. J. He began his mini as director of the Wesley Foundation at the Unive of Pennsylvania. He holds degrees from the Unive of Nebraska, Garrett Biblical Institute and the Uni sity of Chicago.

Rev. JOHN CLARENCE PETRIE *was born int* Methodist family, studied for the Catholic priesth was ordained to the ministry in the Episcopalian Ch and has served during most of his active ministry in Unitarian fellowship. He is minister of the Unita Church in Houston, Texas.

Rev. JAMES E. BELL *is minister of the First* tist Church, Morris, Ill.

Rev. JAMES C. PERKINS *is minister of the* Congregational Church, Niagara Falls, N. Y.

Rev. JOHN HAYNES HOLMES *is minister of* Community Church, New York city.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

WILLIAM C. DONALD, Wesley Memorial Hospital, Chicago, Ill. "Why Be Afraid?" 2 Tim. 1:7—"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

R. C. CAUDILL, First Church of God, Middletown, O. "How to Avert Another World War." Isa. 2:3—"Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord, and he will teach us his will, and we will walk in his paths."

R. PAUL SCHEARRER, Takoma Park Presbyterian, Washington, D. C. "Standing at Kadesh-Barnea." Deut. 1:19-21—"And we came to Kadesh-Barnea. And I said unto you, . . . Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the I God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, nei be discouraged."

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, First Presbyterian, Pittsbu Pa. "Are You Limiting God?" Psalm 78:41—". . . limited the Holy One of Israel."

H. PAUL SLOAN, JR., Dayton Avenue Presbyterian, F dale, Mich. "What Kind of Church Shall We Bui Eph. 2:20—"Jesus Christ being the chief corner sto

MARION DE VELDER, Hope Church, Holland, M "Master of the Situation." Phil. 4:11—"For I learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith t content."

JESSE M. WEBSTER, Woodland Baptist, Philadelphia, "The Bible for Our Day." 2 Tim. 3:14, 15—"But tinue thou in the things which thou hast learned hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou learned them; and that from a child thou hast kn the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Chr

ARLAND V. BRIGGS, Presbyterian, Pleasantville, Pa. " Searching." John 5:39—"You search the script imagining you possess eternal life in their pa

ADDISON L. SMITH, Second Methodist, New Orleans, "Whose Slave Are You?" Josh. 24:15—"Choose this day whom ye shall serve."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

Title of sermon

Text used (write out the text)

Name of minister

Name of church

Address

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

T MONTH, I announced in this place that there would be another conference in the coming spring, similar to that held in Cleveland last ary, to consider the postwar world situation and lation of the churches to it. The announcement was premature. Instead of such a gathering, the entire Federal Council of Churches will meet in special session icago early in March for the same purpose. . . .

ing Hands With ese Christians

month I choose, as the "event" upon which to ent, the visit of a deputation of four Protestant men to Japan. They were Walter W. Van Bishop James C. Baker, Douglas Horton and n J. Shafer. Their mission was sponsored and ed by the Federal Council and the Foreign Mis- Conference. Twice they were received by General rthur with whom they had extended conversa- Each was accorded, separately, an interview with ror Hirohito himself. Many other distinguished ese persons were interviewed, as well as innumer- eople in the common walks of life. But the chief se of the visitation was to meet the Japanese and n Christians, to assure them of the continuing and nd concern of American Christians on their , and to gain in conference with them a knowl- f their present situation and guidance for coopera- n the future. They were received with tears of ng by leaders and members of the Christian ship in both countries. The deputation is unani- in its conviction that, in Japan, Christianity con- an opportunity unequaled since the Christian n began to push outward from the West into the t civilization of the Far East.

The Book of the Month

T THE LORD. *By John Knox. Willett, Clark & npany, $1.75.*

I WERE ASKED: What is the most crucial atter upon which the Christian mind of our time eeds enlightenment from Christian scholarship? uld quickly reply: We need above all else to be n the relevance of the person of Christ in modern tian experience. By this I do not mean a doctrine him. I mean the Person himself. The evangelical calls men to "come to Christ." In him, it affirms, r salvation." These are difficult concepts for the rn mind to grasp. We use them, but use them cally, hardly understanding what we say. Can be made intelligible? Dr. Knox, distinguished Testament scholar, undertakes this very task. In vious book, *The Man Christ Jesus,* he unveils the n figure of the historical Jesus. In the present ne, he unveils the meaning of Jesus in the experi- of the early church, showing how intimate and al in that experience the historical Jesus actually was. In three statements the author tells the whole story: Jesus was remembered; he was known still; he was interpreted. In this simple framework, the book is written. With rare and reverent feeling Dr. Knox penetrates to the secret of the radiance and power of the pristine Christian faith. Its secret was an inspiring memory of the historical Person, an indisputable awareness of his living presence, and a kindling response of intelligence and imagination to understand the significance of the Person whom they remembered and his no less marvelous presence which they continued to experience. You cannot read this illuminating book without saying to yourself: This is the Christian faith; we must possess it and proclaim it today!

A Thought for the Month

THERE come times when faith in the future rests back almost wholly upon the will. We are now living in such a time. Reason is baffled. It cannot "figure out" how the forces of good can possibly gain the ascendancy over the forces of evil. There is idealism, but it is frustrated by man's perversity, by statesmen's blindness, by the church's inertia. This is dramatized at the moment by the terrifying threat of destruction which the atomic bomb holds over the head of civilization. The atomic bomb and the postwar scene, taken together, have strained man's belief in the future as it has never been strained before. For many, the future is sheer darkness and gloom. Unable longer to affirm that the world is "getting better and better every day in every way," they sink into unrelieved and paralyzing pessimism. For others, the outlook upon the world scene is just as realistic, but their reaction is different. Though reason is baffled, the will is still firm, tough and unyielding. What sustains their faith is not the reasonableness of believing, but their own undefeated will. They *will* to believe. They know that if the worst comes, it will be because men and women have ceased to believe, and by their despair and unfaith have let it come. Such believers cannot consent to be numbered among those who have let it come. If the worst comes, they too will, of course, go down with the unbelieving, but they will go down fighting. And they choose to maintain the dignity of the human spirit right up to the final determination of the issue. These are the great souls of the earth, the saviors of their world. They are the fifty or the ten "righteous men" for whose sake Jehovah would have spared Sodom. Because not even ten such men were found, the city was destroyed. The fate of civilization may hang upon those whose will to believe cannot be shaken because their trust is in the mercy and power of God whose ways reason cannot forecast.

The Will to Believe

Charles Clayton Morrison

From the

PEN of HALFORD E. LUCCOCK

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"Professor Luccock takes the reader, as it were, into his own study and shares with him methods which he himself has found fruitful. His sparkling humor, his well-known flair for the apt phrase, and his masterful use of the clinching illustration appear on almost every page."—*Federal Council Bulletin.*

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